



Home Office

Kevin Foster MP
Minister for Future Borders and
Immigration

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Ms Rita Gava
rita@kalayaan.org.uk

DECS Reference: MIN/0140910/21

10 June 2021

Dear Ms Gava,

Thank you for your email of 22 March to the Home Office about reinstating the pre-2012 Domestic Workers in a Private Household visa route. I am sorry for the delay in responding.

The Overseas Domestic Worker (ODW) visa allows private domestic staff to accompany their employer to the UK. Employers must be overseas residents and entering the UK as visitors. This Government does not intend to reinstate the pre-2012 visa category for Domestic Workers in a Private Household which permitted UK based employers to recruit domestic labour from overseas on wages which undercut the UK resident labour market.

Both ODW and Visitor visas are valid for a maximum period of six months, and are issued on the basis both parties intend to leave the UK within this time, in line with the temporary nature of their visa. During their time in the UK, employers and migrant domestic workers are subject to all of the responsibilities and protections offered by UK employment law.

I note the concerns raised in the petition. This Government recognises the potential vulnerability of migrant domestic workers, hence the current system is designed to avoid situations where any domestic worker finds themselves undocumented. A dedicated process exists for victims of modern slavery who entered the UK as a domestic worker. Those who have fallen into this vulnerable position are offered permission to stay in the UK for up to two additional years. This is in addition to the support provided by the Single Competent Authority through the National Referral Mechanism.

This Government remains committed to ensuring the legislative and administrative framework protecting overseas domestic workers from trafficking is practical and effective. We continue to closely monitor the available mechanisms which ensure domestic workers both receive the necessary information and understand where to seek advice should they need it. We will continue to keep all options under review to ensure this objective is met.

While we are not intending to reinstate the pre-2012 visa category for Domestic Workers in a Private Household, those who entered and have remained in the UK under the rules in place before 6 April 2012 are able to extend their leave and eventually apply for settlement.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Foster', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Kevin Foster MP
Minister for Future Borders and Immigration